



## UNDERSTANDING THE LYMPHATIC SYSTEM

### What is Lymph?

Lymph is like our blood; it is a liquid that circulates in our bodies. Blood is pumped by our heart in a circular movement, whereas, lymph has no organ to help move it. Furthermore, lymph fluid moves in one direction: **out of the system**. Basically, lymph is our bodies **liquid trash can**. Lymph is mostly water (95%). This water is referred to as interstitial fluid, which is the water all around and between our cells. This fluid is filled with immune cells, proteins, fats, and other substances.

### How does the lymph work?

The lymph is a collection of nodes, that eventually empty into lymphatic ducts. These ducts deposit lymph into veins for its final exit through the bladder, bowel, and sweat. Lymphoid tissue is also a part of digestion, absorbing fats from the intestines and transporting it to the blood. Lymph also carries white blood cells throughout our bodies to remove foreign waste and dangerous microorganisms. So our lymphatic system returns

unused nutrients and removes debris.

### **An overview of the functions of the lymphatic system?**

- absorbs lipids (fatty substances) and fat-soluble vitamins (vitamin A, D and E) from the GI tract and sends them via your bloodstream to your cells.
- detoxifies microbes and other toxic substances
- returns excess protein molecules and fluid back to circulation.

Over time, the lymphatic channels can break down, age, and become congested-rendering the system unable to function properly. By avoiding toxins, chemicals, and foods that are hard to digest, we can help support and nourish our system. This means avoiding processed foods that are steeped in pesticides, preservatives, and artificial ingredients as much as possible.

Our bodies are unable to produce Omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids which are considered "essential" because our bodies can't survive without them. It is only through diet that we get them. That's where nutrition comes in.

Corn oil is at the top of the do not consume list A balanced consumption of omega-3 and omega-6 oils can benefit the cardiovascular system, skin, joints, hormonal balance, and emotional health.

Salmon, sardines, tuna, grass-fed meats, fish oil, flax oil and walnuts all are good sources of omega-3. Good quality omega-6 oils are found in seeds and unrefined oils. And remember, Omega-6 and 3 fats are unsaturated fats, not saturated fats.



**HERBS THAT HELP DRAIN THE LYMPHATIC SYSTEM**

### **Astragalus: astragalus membranaceus**

Astragalus offers the lymph system several cleansing and healing benefits. It can ease congestion and swelling (as mentioned above, when used in combination with echinacea), and on its own is a great all-around health booster.

### **Calendula officinalis: Calendula officinalis**

Calendula has a wide variety of uses; it is mainly used for swollen lymph nodes, for cleansing body tissues, and for anti-inflammatory purposes.

### **Cleavers: Galium aparine**

Cleavers enhances the function of the lymphatic system and improves its ability to flush out toxins, decrease congestion, and reduce swelling

### **Dandelion: Taraxacum officinale**

Dandelion is used as a detoxifying and purifying agent; it can grow in extremely polluted environments, and therefore has resistance to an array of harmful substances. It is great for cleansing the lymph system of any built-up waste.

### **Devil's Claw: Harpagophytum zeyheri**

The lymph-stimulating properties of this herb make it important for improving the body's natural lymphatic drainage. It promotes detoxification and cleansing of the lymphatic system.

### **Echinacea: Purpurea**

This herb has properties that have a powerful immune-enhancing effect, and can also be used as an anti-inflammatory. Combined with astragalus, it can lessen congestion and swelling in the lymphatic system.

### **Goldenseal: Hydrastis canadensis**

Primarily used as an anti-inflammatory, goldenseal also boosts the cleansing process of the lymphatic system.

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